



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/752,745	12/29/2000	Mustansir Banatwala	LOT9-2000-0028 US1	9602

27085 7590 04/07/2004

IBM CORPORATION
LOTUS SOFTWARE
ONE ROGERS STREET
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02142

EXAMINER

BRANCOLINI, JOHN R

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

2153

DATE MAILED: 04/07/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

14

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/752,745

Applicant(s)

BANATWALA, MUSTANSIR

Examiner

John R Brancolini

Art Unit

2153

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on December 29 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 5 October 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-33 are pending in the current application.

Priority

No claim for priority has been made. The effective filing date of the application is December 29, 2000.

Drawings

The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description:

- Figure 2 items 154, 156, 158, 168
- Figure 6 items 230, 232, 234, 236, 238, 242, 246, 252, 254, 256, 258, 260, 262, 264.
- Figure 8 items 482, 486.

A proposed drawing correction, corrected drawings, or amendment to the specification to add the reference sign(s) in the description, are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities:

Paragraph [0198] refers the reader to Fig. 12, however the reference numbers in the paragraph all relate to Fig. 7.

The cross-references to related applications need to be updated with the current available information regarding the status of the co-pending applications.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-14, 20-25, 31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Tang et al (US Patent 5960173), hereinafter referred to as Tang.

In regards to claim 1, Tang discloses a method for conducting communications within collaboration space, comprising the steps of:

- Organizing said collaboration space to include a place (the system creates a space, organizing all people who are task proximate to the current user into one individual place on the chat network, creating a place dedicated to individuals with a common task or activity, col 4 lines 31-37, 53-67).

- Said place being implemented as a directory (the place is implemented as an encounter window, figure 1 item 20, which acts as a directory organizing all users in a directory, see also col 4 lines 31-37).
- Establishing synchronous communications as a chat session between two or more parties visiting said place (a shared text area, figure 1 item 26 allows users a synchronous communication session, col 8 lines 1-3).

In regards to claim 2, Tang discloses the collaboration space being further organized according to an object model including said place, and further including room, folder, page, member, form, field, placetype, roomtype, skin, and placebot objects (Figure 1 shows the interactive windows a user would encounter in utilizing the system, the windows including a room of users, a folder for storing the html documents and user info, as well as the required files for the chat system, members, forms for organizing the fields, such as the text field, placetype for determining the users task proximities, roomtype for organizing the users according to task proximity, skin for determining the appearance of the windows, and placebot agents for organizing the data exchanged in the chats, see also col 4 lines 22-67, col 5 lines 9-32).

In regards to claim 3, Tang discloses the steps of:

- Presenting said collaboration space to each said party at respective browsers (at each user computer an encounter window is displayed in a browser, see figure 1, also see col 4 lines 24-33).

- Displaying at said browsers a graphical user interface including a chat window for presenting to each said party the identity of other parties visiting said place and selectors for requesting and accepting said synchronous communications (Figure 1 shows the details of the GUI at each browser, including a listing of the identity of each party, icons 22, and a selector for requesting and accepting communications, the contact button, item 40).

In regards to claim 4, Tang discloses the step of:

- Responsive to place manager input, selectively enabling said synchronous communications (a shared text area, figure 1 item 26, allows synchronous communications to be enabled, col 8 lines 1-3).

In regards to claim 5, Tang discloses the step of:

- Displaying a chat session transcript in respective chat windows to all parties participating in said chat session (Figure 1 shows the chat window each user of the system has access to, complete with a text area displaying a transcript of the chat).

In regards to claim 6, Tang discloses the step of:

- Responsive to party selection, selectively opening or opening and minimizing said chat window, said chat session including those parties which have opened or opened and minimized said chat window (the encounter window is

representative of the users participating in the chat, and is updated to reflect those who has closed their chat windows and are no longer participating, and opened on a user computer who has become task proximate, col 4 lines 53-67).

In regards to claim 7, Tang discloses a method for communicating between users in collaboration space, comprising the steps of:

- Establishing a place within said collaboration space and enabling a chat feature among members of said place (the system creates a space, organizing all people who are task proximate to the current user into one individual place on the chat network, creating a place dedicated to individuals with a common task or activity, col 4 lines 31-37, 53-67).
- Responsive to member selection, enabling a user who is a member of said place to chat selectively with one other member, a plurality of other members, or with all members of said place who currently have an open chat window (a shared text area, figure 1 item 26 allows users a synchronous communication session with all users currently having an open window, col 8 lines 1-3).

In regards to claim 8, Tang discloses the step of:

- Displaying in a chat window of each member joining a chat session for said place a transcript of said session (Figure 1 shows the chat window each user

of the system has access to, complete with a text area displaying a transcript of the chat).

In regards to claim 9, Tang discloses the step of:

- Responsive to user selection at said chat window, for said user selectively joining a chat session, sending a chat message, replying to a chat message, leaving said chat session, and extending a chat invitation to another user (upon becoming task proximate, a user joins a chat session where they have the option of sending a chat message in the shared chat area, receiving a chat message in the shared text are, leaving the session by changing their mode to away, or extending an invitation by clicking the contact button, see col 4 lines 38-52, col 8 lines 1-3, lines 52-64).

In regards to claim 10, Tang discloses the step of opening said chat window to enable receipt of an invitation to join a chat session (when a user selects the contact button, a new communication mechanism is opened which the second user can accept, col 8 lines 52-64).

In regards to claim 11, Tang discloses the steps of:

- Displaying in said chat window a list of members currently active in said place (Figure 1 shows the details of the GUI at each browser, including a listing of the identity of each party, icons 22).

- Sending a chat message to a member selected from said list (included in the encounter window is a selector for requesting and accepting communications, the contact button, item 40).

In regards to claim 12, Tang discloses the steps of:

- Selecting from said list a plurality of members currently active in said place (a current user can select one or more users from the list, col 8 lines 54-56).
- Sending an invitation to join a chat session to said plurality of members (clicking the contact button invites other users to participate in a more private chat session, col 8 lines 55-56).

In regards to claim 13, Tang discloses the step responsive to receiving a chat message from a first member of said place, communicating said chat message to all members currently active in said place (a shared text area, figure 1 item 26, allows a communication to be shared among all members, col 8 lines 1-3).

In regards to claim 14, Tang discloses the members currently active in said place being all members in said list, and said chat message being displayed in a transcript area of said chat window (Figure 1 shows the chat window each user of the system has access to, complete with a text area displaying a transcript of the chat).

In regards to claim 20, Tang discloses a system for synchronous communications between users in collaboration space, comprising:

- A server (a communications server links the users, col 8 lines 56-57)
- A plurality of browsers for presenting user interfaces to a place in said collaboration space (Figure 1 shows the chat window each user of the system has access to through a browser loaded on their computer).
- Said user interface including a chat window for displaying messages and replies to messages as a temporary transcript of a chat session among members of said place (Figure 1 shows the chat window each user of the system has access to, complete with a text area displaying a transcript of the chat).

In regards to claim 21, Tang discloses:

- Said user interface including a sidebar selector for opening said chat session (figure 1 shows a sidebar selector labeled contact for opening a chat session).
- Responsive to said selector, said chat window displaying a list of members with open chat windows to said place (Figure 1 shows the details of the GUI at each browser, including a listing of the identity of each party with an open encounter, or chat window, icons 22).
- Responsive to user selection of a selected member from said list, establishing synchronous communications with said selected member (a shared text area,

figure 1 item 26, allows synchronous communications to be enabled, col 8 lines 1-3).

In regards to claim 22, Tang discloses a selector button for minimizing said chat window thereby continuing said user as a member of said chat session while clearing said user interface of said chat window.

In regards to claim 23, Tang discloses a chat button for opening said chat window to initiate a chat session and receive invitations to join chat sessions (figure 1 shows a selector button labeled contact for opening a chat session).

In regards to claim 24, Tang discloses an option menu associated with said chat window for entering invitations to a plurality of members selected from said list to join a chat session (a user has the option of selecting multiple users to join a chat session, col 8 lines 52-56)

In regards to claim 25, Tang discloses a secure message selector operable upon selection to prevent interception of said messages and replies to messages (clicking the contact button invites other users to participate in a more private chat session to prevent the interception of messages by unwanted parties, col 8 lines 55-56).

In regards to claim 31, Tang discloses a program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a machine to perform method steps for conducting communications within collaboration space, said method steps comprising:

- Organizing said collaboration space to include a place (the system creates a space, organizing all people who are task proximate to the current user into one individual place on the chat network, creating a place dedicated to individuals with a common task or activity, col 4 lines 31-37, 53-67).
- Said place being implemented as a directory (the place is implemented as an encounter window, figure 1 item 20, which acts as a directory organizing all users in a directory, see also col 4 lines 31-37).
- Establishing synchronous communications as a chat session between two or more parties visiting said place (a shared text area, figure 1 item 26 allows users a synchronous communication session, col 8 lines 1-3).

In regards to claim 32, Tang discloses a program storage device readable by a machine, tangibly embodying a program of instructions executable by a machine to perform method steps for conducting communications within collaboration space, said method steps comprising:

- Establishing a place within said collaboration space and enabling a chat feature among members of said place (the system creates a space, organizing all people who are task proximate to the current user into one

individual place on the chat network, creating a place dedicated to individuals with a common task or activity, col 4 lines 31-37, 53-67).

- Responsive to member selection, enabling a user who is a member of said place to chat selectively with one other member, a plurality of other members, or with all members of said place who currently have an open chat window (a shared text area, figure 1 item 26 allows users a synchronous communication session with all users currently having an open window, col 8 lines 1-3).

In regards to claim 33, Tang discloses a computer program product or computer program element for conducting communications within collaboration space by organizing said collaboration space to include a place (the system creates a space, organizing all people who are task proximate to the current user into one individual place on the chat network, creating a place dedicated to individuals with a common task or activity, col 4 lines 31-37, 53-67); said place being implemented as a directory (the place is implemented as an encounter window, figure 1 item 20, which acts as a directory organizing all users in a directory, see also col 4 lines 31-37); and establishing synchronous communications as a chat session between two or more parties visiting said place (a shared text area, figure 1 item 26 allows users a synchronous communication session, col 8 lines 1-3).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 15-18, 26-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tang in view of Wick (US Patent 6691162).

In regards to claims 15 and 26, Tang does not directly disclose displaying an invitation box the invitation box having buttons to respond to the invitation and join the chat or decline the invitation to join the chat.

Wick discloses a method of online chatting or instant messaging between two or more users. In this system, a method of inviting a user to chat is described, where the recipient of the invitation has the ability to decline an invitation. Figure 11 shows the initial screen a user encounters when inviting a user to chat, complete with a send button for initiating a session. The recipient screen, shown in figure 10, shows a close button that the second user can utilize to decline an invitation to chat. If the second user decides to engage in a chat session, the send button is used to send a response to the first user (see col 6 lines 1-13). Wick teaches it is useful to have an invite as well as a decline feature to allow users to monitor people signing on and off, and engaging in or avoiding contact with select users (col 2 lines 54-58).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill at the time of invention to modify Tang to include displaying an invitation box the invitation box having buttons to respond to the invitation and join the chat or decline the invitation to join the chat as taught by Wick to allow users to monitor people signing on and off, and engaging in or avoiding contact with select users.

In regards to claim 16 and 27, Tang discloses a user selectable control for defining this user's availability state and toggling off said chat feature to an awareness selector, said awareness selector upon selection displaying said list (a user selects their mode of awareness which determines a user's availability to chat, col 7 line 1-7).

In regards to claim 17 and 28, Tang discloses the awareness selector being reciprocal to prevent lurking (workers appear to each other in the encounter windows with the selected mode to prevent lurking, col 6 lines 21-25).

In regards to claim 18 and 29, Tang discloses the availability state being persistent across sessions (the mode of awareness may be applied to all chat applications on the user's desktop, col 7 lines 7-14).

Claims 19 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tang in view of Wick as applied to claims 15-18, 26-29 above, and further in view

of Using AOL's Instant Messenger (Pages 1-3, Pennsylvania State University, October 2000), hereinafter referred to as Using AIM.

In regards to claims 19 and 30, Tang in view of Wick discloses the limitations of providing a transcript in the chat window, but fails to disclose the option of saving and loading a transcript of a prior session.

Using AIM discloses simple rules to utilizing America Online's instant messenger, including a section (page 3) on saving and storing prior chat transcripts for reading later. Using AIM teaches this is advantageous to one who would like to keep a record of anything discussed during a previous chat session.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to modify Tang in view of Wick to include saving a chat transcript then loading the transcript at a later time in the chat window as taught by Using AIM to allow a user to maintain a record of anything discussed during a previous chat session.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:


- Morris et al. (US Patent 6336133), a method of monitoring users in an online forum utilizing a space organized as a place for chat sessions.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John R Brancolini whose telephone number is (703) 305-7107. The examiner can normally be reached on M-Th 7am-5:30pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Glenton Burgess can be reached on (703) 305-4792. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


JRB


GLENTON B. BURGESS
SUPERIOR PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 2100